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SUBJECT: MINISTER OF INTERIOR ASSERTS ROLE IN SECURITY
SECTOR

REF: A. JERUSALEM 1569

[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 1763

Classified By: Consul General Daniel Rubinstein for reasons 1.5 (b) and
(d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: In a sign of the PA Interior Ministry's growing authority and role as the primary point of contact for donors, Minister Said Abu Ali chaired the first meeting in over a year of the Security Sector Working Group (SSWG). The absence of two key security chiefs -- National Security Forces West Bank Commander Thiab Ali (Abu al Fatah) and Civil Police Chief Hazem Atallah -- suggests that consolidation of the Interior Ministry's authority over these services remains a work in progress. End summary.

MOI AS COORDINATOR OF SECURITY DONORS -- IN THEORY

[1](#)2. (SBU) Chairing the October 20 meeting of the SSWG (a donor forum that had been defunct for over a year), Abu Ali began by stating that the Ministry of Interior (MOI), rather than the individual PA security forces, is the primary PA point of contact for donor projects in the security sector. Flanked by representatives of five of the seven PA security services and representatives from other ministries, he went on to outline six objectives for the next two years, in accordance with the MOI's recently promulgated "Strategic and Execution Framework":

- a) Ensure public order (including by restructuring the security establishment);
- b) Deliver effective and efficient services to citizens;
- c) Ensure transparent and accountable administrative and financial performance;
- d) Develop MOI's relations with local communities;
- e) Make a sustainable contribution to the Palestinian socio-economic situation; and
- f) Integrate MOI's approach to law and order with other justice partners.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Other participants, including General Intelligence (GI) Chief Majid Farraj and Preventive Security Organization (PSO) Chief Hib al Rih, gave presentations affirming the MOI's authority and its role as the lead point of contact with international donors. GI's Farraj said, "our role within the MOI (structure) is to (ensure) law and order... consolidation of the services is being worked on by MOI... the occupation and lack of opportunity are no excuse." PSO's Hib al Rih also discussed the importance of strengthening PA security forces mechanisms to prevent abuse of detainees, including the establishment of an oversight committee for interrogation and detention.

[1](#)4. (C) After the SSWG, Abu Ali told Post that he will

establish a framework to coordinate training of security services, noting that some 30 Presidential Guard officers began a training program in Jordan on October 15 without informing the MOI. While he will not halt uncoordinated training that is already in progress, he will insist that all future training be coordinated with the MOI and the U.S. Security Coordinator (USSC) in advance. Finally, Abu Ali told Post that he had signed a three-year agreement, valued at EUR 6.5 million, with Spanish FM Moratinos to set up maintenance and equipment warehouses for the security services. He cited this as a model of future donor coordination, with the Interior Minister serving as the point of contact and the agreement signed in the presence of PA President Abbas.

COMMENT: SSWG AS A BAROMETER OF CONSOLIDATION?

15. (SBU) The SSWG was established in spring 2008. Its co-chairs are the MOI and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). The USG participates as a donor, with USSC and the European Union Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories serving as technical advisors. The absence of National Security Forces Chief Abu al Fatah and Civil Police Chief Hazim Atallah was noticeable at this October 20 meeting. Atallah sent a deputy of undetermined influence, and Abu al Fatah did not even send a representative. While the MOI's role in chairing the SSWG demonstrated its growing centrality to security sector reform, it also highlighted remaining gaps in the security service consolidation process.
RUBINSTEIN